

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2025  
1:02 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 1186  
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1186 which establishes a Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture.

Farmers face costs that are 40% higher on average than those faced by producers in the continental U.S. Biosecurity is driving those costs up every day.

Including local food in our school and state institutions has the potential to positively impact our local farmers as well as our keiki. The need to work together across agencies is paramount toward getting regional food kitchens off the ground.

As we see in those examples, multiple agencies are needed to coordinate on complex issues like biosecurity and school food - the same is true for many other complex issues Hawai'i farmers and the local food system faces such as land, capital and market access. Coordination is essential to make sure we work together effectively.

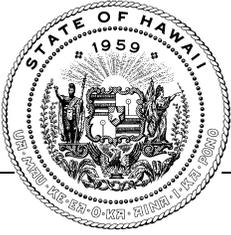
The Senate Resolution 111 Sustainable Food Systems working group has already completed a report outlining initial priorities for coordinating statewide food systems over the next year. A number of foundations supported this initial work.

Appropriations to officially house a Statewide Food Systems Coordination team within the Department of Agriculture is integral to taking this coordination beyond 2025-2026 and making progress on key food systems issues like biosecurity and farm to school.



The HDOA is optimistic that the effort of the Working Group will result in a measurable, science-based, and functional Plan that will promote the State's highest priorities of increasing the economic viability of existing agricultural operations and assist in the establishment of new ones in direct support of increasing local food self-sufficiency and exports.

Thank you for your consideration and support for this measure.



**STATE OF HAWAI'I  
OFFICE OF PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**MARY ALICE EVANS**  
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
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**LATE**

Statement of  
**MARY ALICE EVANS, Director**  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**  
Monday, February 3, 2025, 1:02 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224  
in consideration of  
**SB 1186**  
**RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS.**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

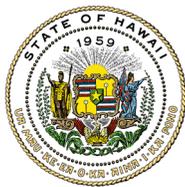
The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** SB 1186, which establishes the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture.

OPSD is proud to have contributed to the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group, playing an active role in the development of an interagency food systems plan through the passage of Senate Resolution 111 in 2024. Our Statewide Sustainability Branch is responsible for and has long been dedicated to developing and promoting policies that align with Hawai'i's sustainability and climate goals, and we are committed to fostering sustainable food systems across the state.

We recognize the Department of Agriculture as a key partner in this transformational effort and are eager to continue our collaboration to advance resilient, sustainable food systems that will ensure the well-being of future generations in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important initiative.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STEPHEN F. LOGAN  
MAJOR GENERAL  
ADJUTANT GENERAL  
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

JAMES DS. BARROS  
ADMINISTRATOR OF  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
KAHU HO'OMALU PŌULIA

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA**  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
4204 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD  
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4420

STATE OF HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 1186,  
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
**AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS  
ADMINISTRATOR  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 3, 2025

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to **COMMENT ON** Senate Bill 1186.

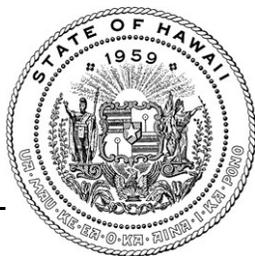
The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency believes in this legislative measure as it aligns with our mission to enhance emergency management preparedness and response throughout the state of Hawai'i.

We propose the establishment of an FTE position within HIEMA. This dedicated role would significantly bolster our operational capacity and facilitate effective coordination among various state agencies involved in food systems management. By having an assigned resource focused on this initiative, HIEMA would support ongoing preparedness efforts related to food distribution.

We appreciate your consideration of this proposal and believe that it will strengthen our collective ability to respond to emergencies and ensure food security for our communities. HIEMA supports this measure, with the understanding that its passage will not negatively impact the priorities outlined in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 1186.

James Barros: [james.barros@hawaii.gov](mailto:james.barros@hawaii.gov); 808-733-4300



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
DIRECTOR

**DANE K. WICKER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
Director  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

Monday, February 3, 2025  
1:02 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of  
**S.B. 1186**  
**RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS.**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the intent of SB1186 and defers to the Department of Agriculture regarding positions and funding considerations related to this measure.

DBEDT has established an internal working group comprising the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD), Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), Department of Agriculture (DOA), University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UHCTAHR), and the Department of Education (DOE). This group focuses on addressing the farm-to-export pipeline, aligning inputs to the Food and Product Innovation Network (value-added production), DOE's regional kitchens (Farm-to-School, Act 175), and Farm-to-State initiatives (Act 176).

These collaborative efforts aim to fulfill the mandate outlined in Act 151 to double local food production and exports by 2030. DBEDT has shared its progress and findings with the interagency food systems working group during the interim, in accordance with SR111, and will continue to engage in these efforts. Our ongoing projects are designed to reduce Hawaii's dependence on imports, strengthen our food security ecosystem, and support the construction of resilient food production facilities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure, and we look forward to continued collaboration to achieve our shared goals of enhancing Hawaii's agricultural capacity and food security.



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Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports SB1186.**

SB1186 proposes the establishment of the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture. This initiative is vital for fostering a comprehensive and integrated approach to enhancing Hawaii's food systems. By coordinating efforts across various sectors, the bill aims to address inefficiencies and foster collaboration that is essential for developing a resilient and sustainable agricultural environment in Hawaii. Encouraging collaborative efforts through these bodies will provide the necessary platform for stakeholders to align their resources, share valuable insights, and strategize effectively towards strengthening Hawaii's food infrastructure.

The appropriation of funds and establishment of dedicated positions demonstrate a commitment to sustaining these efforts for the long term. This financial backing is crucial for successful implementation and for enabling the working group and coordination team to carry out their mandates effectively. With a structured approach to monitoring and evaluating progress through regular reports to the Legislature, SB1186 ensures that strategic adjustments can be made in a timely manner. Supporting this bill paves the way for a more synergized effort in enhancing food security, promoting local agriculture, and ultimately supporting our local farmers and communities in achieving a more sustainable food system for Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
Monday, February 3, 2025 — 1:02 p.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports SB 1186, Relating to Sustainable Food Systems.**

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mariah Yoshizu, and I am the Government Affairs Associate at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono supports SB 1186**, which establishes the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture.

This legislation takes crucial steps toward strengthening Hawai'i's food security and resilience by establishing a coordinated, interagency approach to addressing our food system challenges. The creation of the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and Working Group will help break down silos and foster the collaboration needed to achieve the state's food sustainability goals.

The bill thoughtfully brings together key stakeholders from agriculture, education, health, planning, and other sectors to develop coordinated solutions while providing necessary resources through new dedicated positions. By investing in this integrated approach to food systems planning and implementation, we can make meaningful progress toward increasing local food production, improving food access, reducing waste, and building a more sustainable and equitable food system for Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Mariah Yoshizu  
Government Affairs Associate

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

February 3, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON SB 1186**  
RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:02 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 1186**, which establishes the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture (DOA). This measure aims to improve coordination among state agencies to strengthen Hawai'i's food system, requires reports to the Legislature, establishes positions, and appropriates funds for its implementation.

A coordinated approach to food system development can help address challenges related to local food production, distribution, procurement, and market access. Farmers and ranchers often face regulatory barriers and logistical challenges that limit their ability to expand local food production. By facilitating collaboration between government agencies and agricultural stakeholders, this initiative has the potential to streamline policies, improve procurement processes, and increase opportunities for farmers to participate in state food programs such as Farm to School and Farm to State.

However, we have concerns regarding the proposed salary amounts for the new positions. Ensuring that salaries align with comparable state positions is necessary to maximize funding efficiency and ensure that resources are directed toward direct support for farmers and food producers rather than administrative overhead.

Additionally, there is uncertainty regarding who the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group report to and where their authority is derived from. Clarification is needed to define their decision-

making role, ensure accountability, and prevent duplication of efforts with existing programs and agencies already working to improve Hawai'i's food system. Without clear oversight and guidance, the effectiveness of these teams may be limited.

To improve SB 1186, we recommend:

- Ensuring that farmers and ranchers are actively represented in the working group to provide real-world perspectives on the challenges and opportunities within Hawai'i's food system.
- Adjusting salary levels to be consistent with similar positions within the DOA and other state agencies to ensure fiscal responsibility.
- Defining the reporting structure and decision-making authority of the coordination team and working group to ensure clear oversight and prevent redundancy.
- Developing clear performance metrics and accountability measures to assess the effectiveness of the coordination team and working group in improving food system outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



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#### **Executive Officers**

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**Eddie Asato**, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*  
**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 3, 2025

TIME: 1:02pm

RE: SB1186 Relating to Sustainable Food Systems  
Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure. As the measure notes, food insecurity in Hawaii is alarmingly high, and there are many barriers that make it challenging for businesses that want to produce food locally. HFIA has long advocated for initiatives that will reduce food insecurity; supported local food manufacturing and other local businesses; and served as the voice of Hawaii's food and beverage industry. We have high level understanding of Hawaii's food systems and industry expertise.

We are in agreement with this measure that "achieving a sustainable, resilient, and equitable food system requires collaboration across state agencies, producers, retailers, non-governmental organizations, and community members."

Under Section 2 paragraph (c) the measure states that "The co-chairs may invite other representatives of interested organizations with relevant experience and expertise to participate in the interagency food systems working group, as necessary."

We encourage the co-chairs to ensure that when they are inviting representatives of interested organizations that members of the food and beverage industry in general, and HFIA specifically are included.

We encourage the Committee to pass this measure, and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

**SB1186**  
RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS.

Monday, February 3, 2025, 1:02 PM  
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports SB1186** which establishes the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture.

The state has many goals for increasing local food production and increasing departmental local food purchasing. However, progress towards these goals have been slow and more attention is needed to identify where the bottlenecks are and what is needed to start meaningfully supporting our farmers and ranchers and making local food more accessible to our community.

We support this measure because Hawaii's cattlemen are ready and willing to supply a high quality protein for our community, but there are procurement and procedural issues to overcome. If solutions can be found for the state to begin consistently sourcing local beef, it would provide ranchers with a reliable market to encourage more local beef production, increase our access to a high quality protein source, improve community health, and move the needle on the states local food production goals.

In the 2023-2024 school year, beef contributed the highest number of local food purchasing for school lunches at 3%. The DOE is currently tasked with increasing local food served in public schools to 30% by 2030. Hawaii's paniolo can supply more than 3%, but the system is currently too complicated and the purchases aren't happening. Our hope is that this Interagency Food Systems Coordination team will help us to help the state meet its local food goals.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75%



of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Managing Director



Testimony of  
**MetroGrow Hawaii**  
Kerry Kakazu, Ph.D., President

To the  
**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**  
**Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair**  
**Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair**

**COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**  
**Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair**  
**Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

DATE: Monday, February 12  
TIME: 1:02 PM  
PLACE: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

**Chairs Gabbard and Dela Cruz and Members of the Committees:**

**Measure:** S.B. No. 1186

**Title:** RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS.

**Description:** Establishes the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture. Requires reports to the Legislature. Establishes positions. Appropriates funds.

**Position:** MetroGrow Hawaii is in strong support of this measure.

**Testimony:** Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in full support of this measure. I applaud the recognition by the parties involved of the critical need for our small, isolated and vulnerable island community to prioritize local food production to ensure food security and self-sufficiency.

MetroGrow Hawaii was established in 2014 as the first indoor, vertical hydroponic farm in the state and has been supplying premium produce to local restaurants and markets for over 10 years. Our experience has established that controlled environment agriculture is a technology that works very well to grow a wide variety of crops. We have also been researching how we can expand our farming operations to contribute to the State's goals of local food production, especially to meet the demands of institutional customers such as the Department of Education.

The establishment of the proposed interagency working group will promote a more comprehensive, cohesive, holistic and strategic approach to the critical issue of strengthening our local food systems in

the face of the environmental, economic and societal challenges facing Hawai'i. The broad composition of the committee is admirable and will foster creative thinking and solutions to this daunting task. As the president/owner of an agricultural/technology company I would like to suggest that the committee also include additional representatives from the agricultural community. The College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience most recent strategic plan puts and emphasis on food systems and with their capacity for research, education and outreach needs to be included in any discussions about our future food needs. I also believe a representative to represent our farming community will strengthen the efforts of the committee. A representative from an agency such as the Hawaii Farm Bureau that already advocates tirelessly in the legislature for local agriculture will offer a valuable perspective.

I am encouraged by this proposal and the willingness of the legislature to provide the necessary funding to foster its success. I urge the passage of this important measure and stand ready to assist in any way to advance this effort for our food future. Thank you very much.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry Kakazu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kerry" and last name "Kakazu" clearly distinguishable.

Kerry Kakazu, Ph.D.

President, MetroGrow Hawaii



BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

BOARD OF  
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Ramsey Brown

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Danny  
Rubenstein

EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

Dave Elliott

DATE: 2/3/2025  
TIME: 1:02pm  
CONFERENCE ROOM : 224

SENATE BILL NO. 1186  
RELATING TO RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of SB 1186 establishing a Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture.

The following are just a few of the goals, mandates and visions we have for our local food and agriculture system:

*Ensure 50% of foods are local agriculture or valued-added/food products within key state institutions by 2050 (Act 176, SLH 2021).*

*Farmers, ranchers, aquaculturists, and plant nursery growers experience reduced risk to production, broaden local and export markets, and receive effective support to detect and control pests (Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan, Vision Section 1.1).*

*Double local food production by 2030 (Act 151, SLH 2019).*

How are we currently coordinating a systematic effort to achieve them?

An Interagency Food Systems Working Group with "backbone" support from a coordination team is essential to answer this question.

With high and increasing agricultural production costs – as well as local food costs – effective and coordinated policy and action are critical to strengthening our economy, food system and ensuring no residents face hunger, now or in times of natural disaster.

There are more than 25 similar state-level efforts across the U.S. as well as multiple food systems planning efforts led by our own counties. This bill will enable us to coordinate our local efforts, while drawing lessons from innovations across the country.

Our farmers, food producers, distributors and most importantly, residents, are depending on our efforts.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of this vital measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Elliott", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dave Elliott  
**Executive Director**

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 8:04:35 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Colehour Bondera	Testifying for Kanalani Ohana Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

Please seriously support this important piece of legislation.

As a life-long farmer and someone who sells produce for the past 20 years at a farmers market, and who provides direct sales of our other produce, there must be Hawaii support for how to ensure that the whole food system is healthy and sustainable.

Sincerely,

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHANA FARM

colemel2@gmail.com

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 8:08:40 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy Redfeather	Testifying for Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Sounds like an idea the community has been wanting for many years. Mahalo to HDOA for moving forward with this establishment of office and staff.

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 9:19:52 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sandra Tran	Testifying for Kapanaiia Farms	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please consider including a position for food preservation and food safety within the knowledge base for this coordination team. Having properly preserved foods (1) allows our community to have healthy local foods on demand, (2) reduces our dependency on store bought canned foods which are full of fat and salt, (3) allows farmers to extend the shelf life of their products, and (4) sets the community with healthy local foods in the case of an emergency. There needs to be more and better food preservation education in our state so that we can learn how to preserve our crops, especially when the shelf life of the product is short and will go to waste if we are not able to sell it or consume it within a time period. If we could only focus on one section of food preservation, please consider funding for home canning training and education. Mahalo nui.



February 1 2025

To: Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **SB 1186**, Relating to Sustainable Food System.

I am writing in strong **support** of SB 1186. This bill recognizes the critical need for a coordinated, interagency approach to addressing Hawaii's complex food system challenges.

The bill acknowledges that tackling food system challenges requires a multidisciplinary, collaborative effort that is firmly grounded in empirical data. Numerous studies have demonstrated that food systems are interconnected and multifaceted that requires expertise from various agencies to develop effective strategies and actions. SB 1186 directly addresses this need by establishing a statewide interagency food systems coordination team and a working group.

These issues of enhancing our economy, boosting local food production, improving access to healthy food, minimizing food waste, and reducing food insecurity are not isolated rather they are intrinsically linked. Therefore, a coordinated approach is essential to making meaningful progress in each of these areas.

The establishment of the food system specialist and policy analyst positions within the Department of Agriculture is another vital component of this bill. These dedicated roles will provide the necessary expertise and capacity to support the interagency working group and ensure its effectiveness. These positions will be instrumental in developing and implementing evidence-based policies that promote local food production, improve access to nutritious food, reduce waste, and mitigate the impacts of climate change on our food system. They will also play a key role in coordinating with stakeholders and community members to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in the decision-making process.

Hawaii's current food system faces significant challenges and calls for the urgent need for a coordinated, statewide strategy. SB 1186 offers a concrete step in the right direction by creating the framework for a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system for all of Hawaii's

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**The Food+ Policy internship** develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



**HAWAI'I  
FOOD+  
POLICY**

Honolulu, HI 96813  
food@purplemaia.org

residents. I believe this bill will significantly enhance our ability to achieve our state's sustainability goals and improve the well-being of our communities.

I urge the committee to pass SB 1186. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,  
Lea iaea & the Food+ Policy Team  
#fixourfoodsystem

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**The Food+ Policy internship** develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 11:00:31 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ronald Weidenbach	Testifying for Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA) supports the purpose of SB1186 to establish a statewide interagency food systems coordination team and an interagency food systems working group within the department of agriculture.

However, the "real world" effectiveness of this group o improve local agriculture would significantly benefit from diverse industry participation. This possibility is allowed under SB1186 by potential invitation but is not specificatly noted. We therefore respectfully encourage appropriate ammendment(s) to this effect.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB1186.



**The Hawai'i Youth Food Council**

Gigi Kiyabu - Mid-Pacific  
Shania Wilson - Mililani High School  
Vivienne Hill - Primsa High School  
Kaylie Hirayama - Honoka'a High School  
Star Woo - Kamehameha Schools Kapalama Campus  
Quingqing Quen - 'Iolani School  
Maya Gaudino - Punahou  
Jaden Tonyokwe - Maui High School  
Leilani Moran Hurtt - Mid-Pacific  
Alvis Agader - Maui High School  
Alliyanah Polido - Maui High School  
Chloe Hannsz - Kapaa High School  
Audrey Lin - 'Iolani School  
Talia David - Lahainalua High School  
Mia Nishiguchi - Kalani High School  
Erika Tien - Punahou

**Date: 02-01-2025**

**To: Senator Gabbard, Chair**

**Senator Richards, Vice Chair**

**Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment (AEN)**

**From: Hawai'i Youth Food Council**

**Re: SUPPORT for SB1186**

**Hearing: 02-03-25, Monday, 1:02 PM**

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Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee, My name is Vivienne, and I submit this testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Youth Food Council (HYFC) in strong support of SB 1186.

This bill establishes a Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and an Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture to improve food security and resilience in Hawai'i. Hawai'i faces critical challenges in food insecurity and reliance on imports, with nearly one-third of households experiencing food insecurity according to the Hawai'i Food Bank. SB 1186 is a vital step toward focusing efforts across agencies to build a more sustainable and resilient food system.

**Youth Representation Matters**

We urge the legislature to include a designated youth advisory seat on the Interagency Food Systems Working Group. Young people are critical stakeholders in shaping food policy, as we are not only future leaders but also active participants in food system innovation today. Youth bring fresh perspectives, firsthand experiences, and long-term vision to discussions on food security and climate resilience.

To ensure meaningful representation, we propose that this youth advisory seat be held by a Hawai'i resident aged 16-24 with experience in food systems advocacy, agriculture, sustainability, or food security efforts. This designated seat would empower young leaders to directly contribute to statewide

[hiphi.org/HYFC](http://hiphi.org/HYFC) • 707 Richards Street, Suite 300 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Hawai'i Youth Food Council is a Hawai'i Farm to School Network program and Hawai'i Public Health Institute program. It includes students from public, charter, and independent high schools across Hawai'i. The council was established in 2020 to engage and empower youth in rewriting the present narrative of Hawai'i's food system. Members identify and address systemic issues throughout various dimensions of the food chain to promote community participation in forming resilient, equitable local food economies.



policy decisions, aligning with Hawai'i's commitments to youth engagement and intergenerational collaboration in government. We respectfully ask the committee to pass SB 1186 and include a youth advisory seat to ensure that Hawai'i's young leaders have a voice in our sustainable food future.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Vivienne Hill

Representative, Hawai'i Youth Food Council

[hiphi.org/HYFC](http://hiphi.org/HYFC) • 707 Richards Street, Suite 300 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The **Hawai'i Youth Food Council** is a Hawai'i Farm to School Network program and Hawai'i Public Health Institute program. It includes students from public, charter, and independent high schools across Hawai'i. The council was established in 2020 to engage and empower youth in rewriting the present narrative of Hawai'i's food system. Members identify and address systemic issues throughout various dimensions of the food chain to promote community participation in forming resilient, equitable local food economies.

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 6:28:40 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Comment: (2) Act 151 from increase food exports by 2030 TO REDUCE food exports for the reason of lowering the "cost of food" in Hawaii. In addition the upcoming tariff imposed the White House!

Thank you for allowing me to comment on SB 1186.

Johnnie-Mae L. Perry

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 6:07:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Logan Taylor P Motas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB1186. It is an absolute necessity that a team of individuals across agencies tackle the issue of Hawai'i having our own sustainable food system. By establishing positions and appropriating funds towards this cause, we heighten our likelihood to support local agriculture and rely less on imports.

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 7:32:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

I urge the Committee to SUPPORT this bill! Help us use agricultural and food development to diversify our economy.

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 8:41:29 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Edward Johnston	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For the good of Hawai'i agriculture and farmers and all people, we need to make efforts to support and promote local food production, with regards to farms producing food!

## TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

On SB1186 Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and an Interagency Food Systems Working Group

Hearing Date: February 3, 2025

Hearing Time: 1:00pm

Conference Room: Conference Room 224

Position: Strong Support of SB1186

Hello Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Committee:

My name is Taylor Wilson, and I am an Indigenous food sovereignty scholar and Ph.D. student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I strongly support SB1186, which seeks to establish a Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and an Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture. This bill is a crucial step toward strengthening Hawai'i's food system, enhancing local food production, integrating Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander food systems, and building a more resilient and sustainable food economy. It also serves as a model for interagency collaboration and Indigenous-led food sovereignty initiatives, demonstrating how policy-driven food system reform can enhance climate resilience, economic stability, and public health at national and international levels.

Hawai'i faces significant food security challenges, with nearly one-third of households experiencing food insecurity—a rate higher than the national average (Hawai'i Foodbank, 2023). The state imports 85-90% of its food, making it vulnerable to supply chain disruptions, climate-related disasters, and economic instability (Kurashima et al., 2019).

Despite past legislative efforts, such as Act 151 (2019) (which aimed to double local food production by 2030) and Acts 175 and 176 (2021) (which promoted local food procurement), major barriers to food system sustainability remain:

- Limited interagency coordination between government agencies and stakeholders (Rowe et al., 2024).
- Insufficient infrastructure and resources to support local farmers and food producers (Kurashima et al., 2019).
- Lack of comprehensive data and strategic planning to measure and implement effective food system policies (Millin, 2020).

Additionally, only 11.6% of food available for consumption in Hawai'i is locally produced, highlighting extreme dependence on food imports (Loke & Leung, 2013).

This bill directly addresses these challenges by:

1. Establishing a Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team
  - Creates a centralized body to oversee food system initiatives and align state efforts with sustainability goals.
  - Promotes collaboration among government agencies, local farmers, businesses, and community organizations to strengthen Hawai'i's food systems.
2. Creating an Interagency Food Systems Working Group
  - Ensures food policy is developed with representation from agriculture, education, health, planning, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander governance structures.
  - Supports community-led food systems planning at county and local levels.
3. Investing in Infrastructure and Workforce Development
  - Allocates funding for key positions to oversee planning, policy evaluation, and operational needs.
  - Provides resources for stakeholder engagement, public meetings, and strategic planning.
4. Integrating Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Traditional Food Systems
  - Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander food systems, such as loko i'a (fishponds) and lo'i kalo (taro fields), are sustainable and climate-resilient, producing food without artificial inputs (Millin, 2020).
  - Revitalizing Indigenous agriculture could match modern food production levels, even under future climate change scenarios (Kurashima et al., 2019).
  - Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities face disproportionately high rates of food insecurity, largely due to land displacement and the loss of traditional food systems (Rowe et al., 2024).
  - Strengthening Indigenous food sovereignty aligns with global best practices, including the Paris Agreement's recommendation to integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into climate adaptation and food security policies (Millin, 2020).
5. Enhancing Climate Resilience and Reducing Reliance on Imports
  - Hawai'i's Indigenous agricultural systems, such as dryland 'uala (sweet potato) farms and colluvial agroforestry, are highly resilient to climate change (Kurashima et al., 2019).
  - 71% of traditional agricultural lands remain zoned for farming, meaning they can be revitalized to increase local food production (Kurashima et al., 2019).

- Investing in local food systems and interagency collaboration will reduce dependency on imports and strengthen community resilience in the face of disasters (Rowe et al., 2024).

#### 6. Improving Public Health Outcomes

- Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders experience disproportionately high food insecurity rates, which are strongly linked to diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic diseases (Rowe et al., 2024).
- Increasing access to fresh, local food through better food system coordination can help reduce diet-related chronic diseases.
- Federal food assistance programs like SNAP and FDPIR fail to provide culturally appropriate foods, exacerbating health disparities in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities (Rowe et al., 2024).

SB1186 is a vital step toward ensuring food security, economic stability, and climate resilience for Hawai'i. The evidence is clear: coordinated efforts to strengthen local food production, revitalize Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander food systems, and integrate sustainability practices will create a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable food system.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to pass SB1186.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

TAYLOR WILSON, MDP  
Public Health Ph.D. Student  
University of Hawai'i At Mānoa  
wilsont3@hawaii.edu

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 6:58:00 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Theresa M Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB 1186 RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS.

Mahalo,

Theresa Thompson

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 11:40:20 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chantelle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1186. We need to set up Hawai'i for success now and more so for our future. Food is important. We depend too much of our food supply to be imported here. Why not establish a Statewide Interagency Food System Coordination Team to help support a sustainable Food System here in Hawai'i. Households Food insecurity, investing and supporting local farmers which means economic growth is important issues we face. Look at what has been happening and is currently happening when there is a pandemic, emergency or natural disaster. People panic and pay too much for goods. These are important issues of Hawai'i let's keep working to lead Hawai'i to a brighter future.

Thank you,

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 8:19:06 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jamie Barton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 11:51:08 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
McKenzie Wildey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our island's food security is more critical than ever. I support this measure.



*Restore the Commons*

Monday, February 3, 2025, 1:02 pm

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

SENATE BILL 1186 – RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Position: Whole-hearted and Relieved Support

Me ke Aloha, Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

SB1186 establishes the Statewide Interagency Food Systems Coordination Team and the Interagency Food Systems Working Group within the Department of Agriculture, establishes positions, and appropriates funds.

Little needs to be said about the critical nature this bill addresses. With climate change continuing to spiral out of control, a small taste of portents producing such horrific results in Lāhainā, and the painful experience of the COVID shutdown revealing our proximity to Statewide starvation in the face of another disaster, Hawaii needs to mobilize critical resources and decision-makers to radically transform our food security.

Consecutive Food Summits have gathered hundreds of practitioners, innovators, community groups, and individuals around this urgent necessity, ready to build an alternative food production and distribution system. It's all hands on deck.

Mahalo for the opportunity to address this issue,

/s/ Charley Ice, Hoa'āina, Waimalu, O'ahu;

retired Hydrologist, Commission on Water Resource Management (25 years) and Planner at DHHL (10 years);

former Chair of O'ahu Democratic Party Region 5 ('Aiea-Pearl City);

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 2:35:00 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support. Thank you.

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 5:46:46 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lu Ann Mahiki Lankford-Faborito	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As farmers in Hoolehua, Molokai we strongly support this matter.

**SB-1186**

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 4:33:00 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Albie Miles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB 1186  
Relating to Sustainable Food Systems

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

As a citizen and a food system scholar, I write to provide my strong endorsement of SB 1186, which provides critical support for food system planning in Hawai‘i—a necessary step to ensure the state can meet its ecological, climate, public health, and economic development goals. Without a clear strategic plan and enabling policy conditions, Hawai‘i will remain unable to fulfill its many legal mandates related to food security, sustainability, and economic resilience.

Food system planning is well established across the United States, with over 18 states, as well as numerous regions and municipalities, having developed comprehensive frameworks to guide their food and agriculture systems to reach multiple health, equity, resilience and sustainability goals. Hawai‘i must not fall behind. This legislation builds on Hawai‘i SR111 SD 1 and the resultant Inter-agency Food System Working Group and the [Report to the Hawai‘i State Legislature](#), which underscores the urgent need for coordinated action to strengthen our local food system. (*Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture, 2023*).

The food system planning efforts outlined in SB 1186 have been informed by dozens of technical experts and agency leads, including representatives from the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Department of Health (DOH), Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD), Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), farmer organizations, University of Hawai‘i faculty, and community leaders. Their collective expertise has shaped this initiative, ensuring it is grounded in both science and the lived experiences of those who produce, distribute, and consume food in Hawai‘i.

Importantly, this work will be accelerated and strengthened by the formation of a new National Community of Practice of Food System Planning Initiatives, organized by the Michigan State University (MSU) Center for Regional Food Systems. By advancing a statewide food system plan, Hawai‘i will not only align itself with national best practices but also position itself as a leader in sustainable, climate-resilient agri-food policy, planning and implementation.

I urge the Legislature to pass SB 1186 to ensure Hawai'i has the necessary support and framework to further build a resilient, equitable, and thriving food system that benefits all residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.

Sincerely,

Albie Miles, Ph.D.

[uhwoscfs@gmail.com](mailto:uhwoscfs@gmail.com)

310-902-0531

**Professional Biosketch:** Albie Miles is Associate Professor of Sustainable Community Food Systems at the University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu (UHWO). Dr. Miles received his Ph.D. in Environmental Science, Policy and Management from the University of California, Berkeley. His research explores the relationship between farming system biodiversity and ecosystem services from agriculture, and the social, economic and political obstacles to the advancement of ecologically sustainable and socially just food and farming systems regionally, nationally and internationally. He has worked at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS) at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Dr. Miles has over 25 years of experience in the field of agroecology and sustainable food systems research, education, policy, planning and evaluation. Dr. Miles is a founding member of the Sustainable Agriculture Education Association (SAEA) and serves on the Executive Committee of the Inter-institutional Network for Food, Agriculture and Sustainability (INFAS). Dr. Miles currently serves as Chief Specialty Editor for the Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems Section on Social Movements, Institutions and Governance, and is the Co-Director of the Ke O Mau Center for Sustainable Island Food Systems of the University of Hawai'i System.